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ABSTRACT

This document describes the philosophical underpinnings for restructuring education and reforming education personnel training through partnerships with the private sector. Examples of successful business-education partnerships are presented to illustrate how both areas can benefit from such partnerships. It is argued that the preparation of teachers and other school personnel must reflect the imperatives of the future, and business-education alliances must be undertaken to provide a wide range of supports that are not available to education systems working in isolation. (CB)

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MEETING THE IMPERATIVES OF THE 21ST CENTURY:

BUSINESS-EDUCATION ALLIANCES IN THE UNITED STATES

Prepared by

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About the National Commission on the 2000 Imperative

The National Commission on the 2000 Imperative is a coalition of educational leaders who are examining ways in which educators can best help today's students become fully-functioning citizens in the world of the 21st century.

The Commission is also concerned with improvements in educational environments, modes of teaching and learning, and private- and public-sector alliances in the strengthening of education systems.

The Commission is composed of twenty teachers, supervisors, and university professors representing every region of the country.

As we approach the start of the Twenty-First Century, much is being written and spoken about the future of our world. Educators, mindful of their mission, are seeking new and more effective ways of preparing their charges for success in the decades ahead. The business world has a legitimate stake .in the new generation of leaders who will, with greater or lesser success, assume the mantle of control and guidance of economic institutions from those presently in leadership positions.

The concerns and anxieties of business and education leaders is amplified by what appears to be a geometric increase in the rate of change our societies are experiencing. As one educational leader remarked recently, "Bob Dylan may not have known how right he was when he sang the prophetic words 'The times they are a changing' -- and that was more than two decades ago!"

Indeed! The social, technological, and informational changes we will witness in the thirteen years prior to the turn of the century will make previous rates of change seem snail-paced by comparison.

The nature of these changes is, to a certain degree, known to us today. Business and educational leaders have been studying the ramifications and implications of projected changes, with an eye to how they might best prepare today for the exegencies made manifest by those changes.

We know that the information explosion will continue at geometric rates of progression. The preponderence of factual information we are today teaching our young people as "Truth" will be obsolete or meaningless in the next century. Teachers who teach mainly for factual retention will be as out

of place in the 21st century as the old rusting steel mills are today in the new high-tech computer capital of Pittsburgh. In fact, teachers will have little option but to acknowledge the dynamic, ever-changing nature of information by changing their instructional emphasis from content-learning to process-learning.

In the world of the future, the mission of education will be more clearly teach students how to think, not what to know. In the increasingly dynamic world of information processing, analysis, and application, factual information is useful only as a tool. Facts will not be useful as end points, only as access points within a process. The futility of rote memorization as a meaningful educational device is know to teachers who have had the opportunity of testing the retention of factual information in even the best students months or even weeks after the information had first been "mastered."

The modern school will itself change dramatically in the 21st century. If Arthur C. Clark, in his new work July 20, 2019: Life in the 21st Century is correct, then

> Traditional schools, kindergarten through high school, will change because of new technologies. In fact, education's basic emphasis will shift. Our current educational system evolved to produce workers for the Industrial Revolution's factory-based economy, for work that requires patience, docility, and the ability to endure boredom. Students learned to sit in orderly rows, to absorb facts by rote, and to move as a group through the material regardless of individual differences in learning speed. But no factory jobs will be left in 2019. Except for a few technicians to watch over control panels, tomorrow's factories will be automatic,

with computers directing robot workers.

> In this new computer-based economy, more and more jobs will involve the creation, transmission, and processing of information and ideas. As the number of jobs based on muscle and mindless repetition wanes, industry and business will increasingly require workers with sharp thinking skills. And, because most people will be taking courses lifelong, they will need to know how to learn -- education itself will be a skill that virtually everyone will need. As a result, the emphasis in elementary and high school will shift: In the school of the future, the focus will be on teaching how to think and how to learn.
>
> "We will have to deal with questions unforeseeable today; and so we need a broad-based education," says Barnard College president Ellen Futter. "We need people who can think outside their own areas of specialization. We must give people certain key intellectual skills -- analytical thinking, critical thinking, the ability to make judgments, to reason quantitatively, to balance opposed points of view. We must focus more on how to learn, how to think."

The implication for teachers is clear. Educators must replace their current self-image as repositories of information with a more currently significant role as facilitators of learning and agents of transformation. James Macgregor Burns in his 1979 Pulitzer-prizewinning book Leadership, distinguishes between transactional leaders and transformational leaders. Transactional leaders accept the status quo and base their management styles and career possibilities upon adherence to it. Transformational leaders, by contrast, seek to bring about a different, and presumably better, order by changing the basic context and process of the endeavor, and by leading others to act as change agents in this regard.

Marilyn Furguson in her groundbreaking work The Aquarian Conspiracy speaks of the need in our future for teachers who are transformational rather than simply transactional:

> The transforming teacher senses readiness to change, helps the "follower" or student respond to more complex needs, transcending the old levels again and yet again. The true teacher is also learning and is transformed by the relationship. Just as Burns pointed out that a dictator is not a true leader because he is not open to input from his followers, a closed teacher -- the mere "power wielder" -- is not a true teacher.
>
> The closed teacher may fill the student with information. But the learner forfeits his participation. The students, like the citizens of a dictatorship, are unable to feed their needs and readiness back to the one who is supposed to facilitate their growth. It is like the difference between a loudspeaker and an intercom.
>
> The open teacher, like a good therapist, establishes rapport and resonance, sensing unspoken needs, conflicts, hopes, and fears. Respecting the learner's autonomy, the teacher spends more time helping to articulate the urgent *questions* than demanding right answers.

If the American and world economies are to survive into the next century, we will depend upon a much different work force than presently exists. We will need to rediscover innovation, creativity, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Perhaps those three characteristics are the "basics" we should be moving toward.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Yale professor of Organization and Sociology and consultant to Fortune 500 companies, has studied the atrophying spirit of the

workplace, and she suggests that we must dramatically change our perspectives. She writes in her book The Changemasters:

> I found that the entrepreneurial spirit producing innovation is associated with a particular way of approaching problems that I call "integrative": the willingness to move beyond received wisdom, to combine ideas from unconnected sources, to embrace change as an opportunity to test limits. To see problems integratively is to see them as wholes, related to larger wholes, and thus challenging established practices -- rather than walling off a piece of experience and preventing it from being touched or affected by any new experiences.

I, too, am convinced that, if our students are to be successful individually and collectively in the world of the future, we must give them today the tools to perceive connections and possibilities. We must encourage them to build bridges between seemingly disparate ideas and concepts and beliefs.

Today's true-false tests do not provide a useful metaphor for the diversities of our world in the 21st century. The "one right answer" is inherently dichotomistic. It creates a mindset of intolerance, bigotry, and ethnocentrism. In a rapidly shrinking world we can no longer afford such narrowness of thought.

As Leo Buscaglia says in his book Living, Loving and Learning:

> The time to start building bridges to others is now. The salvation will be in our working together for common ends, not bursting off into little provincialities and insisting, "I am right."

> One of my most significant discoveries in the last few years is that I don't have to be right all the time. Isn't that nice? That frees you to be right some of the time. And would you like to know something else I found out? I can be right, and you can be right. We can both be right. There are two rights!
>
> And then I discovered that there can be two hundred rights, that there really isn't a right or wrong, but an enormous gray area with all kinds of gradations.
>
> Dichotomies are distancing phenomena. Let's find out first what we have in common. There are no two of us alike, still we have much in common, and it is in that commonness in which we can begin. If we can get in touch with that, we are on our way.

Educators in the United States are now beginning to see that the future of their nation, and of the world in the 21st century, will depend to some extent upon developing a new generation of business and government leaders who are more globally-oriented, who think and act in less dichotomistic ways. Indeed, those leaders will need to be sharp thinkers who are clever in conceiving new, workable formulations to personal and professional challenges. Many of the challenges will be new ones which will require fresh approaches and at least a measure of transformational leadership, creativity, and an entrepreneurial spirit. Anything less will surely spell failure.

Business leaders in the United States are well aware of this. They are also aware that American schools are currently not preparing the vast majority of young people for the imperatives of the next century.

Literature generated by the business world reflects a sense of urgency in

finding and implementing solutions to the problem. A 1985 publication of the New York-based Committee for Economic Development entitled Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools makes it very clear that business-education partnerships represent more than mere philanthropy or the production of good public relations in the community. Such partnerships really represent an essential and timely investment in the next generation of business and government leaders. The tone and content of the message is clear and unequivocal. Action must be taken now, before it is too late.

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students echoes the call for intervention by business and the public in realigning the priorities of our school systems to meet the demands of the future. In its 1985 book, Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk, the Coalition includes among its recommendations the establishment or strengthening of "broadly-based community councils of educators, parents, business, and labor representatives responsible for helping to develop vocational education programs" as part of a larger goal to "move vocational education programs away from the current narrow focus upon job skills and toward the broader goals of preparing young people for a changing world of work."

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States makes known its support of private-sector initiatives in public education in its 1985 publication, Business and Education: Partners for the Future:

> As parents and employers, business leaders have a need and a duty to enter the dialogue on education reform -- not to point fingers but to help ensure that the resources made

available to our school systems result in educated students.

> The business community is directly affected by the lower levels of performance of the American education system. The current information-technology boom, coupled with immense domestic and international competition, pose increasing demands for skilled workers. The use of new production methods that allow more goods to be produced by fewer workers will limit employment for unskilled and/or semi-skilled workers. Further, the U.S. Department of Labor predicts that skilled workers are less likely to be displaced by changes in technology.
>
> The business community has come to realize that increased involvement in education, at all levels, is essential to long-term economic growth. Business-education cooperation must be strengthened if the nation is to address properly the training and retraining of future and existing workers, help students develop effective "school-to-work" and "school-to-college" skills, and meet the needs of increased minority and other special populations.

The Chamber's report strongly recommends long-term commitments by business to mutually-supportive partnerships with the schools through a variety of mechanisms, ranging from monetary support to mentor programs for students, to programs of recognition and awards to encourage innovation and excellence among students, teachers, and administrators.

One such partnership has drawn critical acclaim from both the private and public sector. It is the Corridor Partnership for Excellence in Education, a consortium of leaders representing elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, research and development laboratories, business and industry, and government and labor in northern Illinois. CPEE has two stated goals:

(1) To act as a **catalyst** in bringing together business,

research, education, government and labor leaders in Illinois, and

(2) To serve as a **broker** in exchanging and sharing resources among business, research, and education, to support and enrich mathematics and science instruction.

Among the points of CPEE's "underlying philosophy" are these beliefs:

* To insure meaningful reform, this new relationship directs us to focus primarily on the improved instruction of students and the *continuing professional development of teachers.*

* The emphasis today is on taking a closer look at how the goals of business and education are related. We are going to need each other in the challenging years ahead. Schools will need the technological expertise and political support of business. The private sector will continue to need well-educated, enthusiastic young people who are prepared to make a valuable contribution to the economy and to society.

Teachers are invited by CPEE to take advantage of summer employment opportunities in the research and development sector, to provide the teachers with an inside perspective of the private sector's needs, strengths, and modes of operation. In this way, teachers are better able to reflect to their students a more accurate comprehension of the workplace and its dynamics.

CPEE's involvement with students includes a mentor program, matching individual students with suitable individual professionals in many diverse career fields. A "Saturday Scholars" program brings top-name experts in

a variety of disciplines from around the nation to northern Illinois for one-day student seminars.

CPEE was also instrumental in the founding of the new Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, a publicly funded three-year residential high school for students who wish to pursue careers in high-technology fields. It must be emphasized, however, that the academic program is a complete and well-rounded one, incorporating the humanities, foreign languages, English, social sciences, fine and performing arts, and intramural and interscholastic sports. The governor of the state, James R. Thompson, was instrumental in the development of CPEE and the Academy. They both mirror his stated philosophy: "Leaders in education, at every level, must reach out and forge new alliances of parents, teachers, and students with communities, businesses, labor, and industry."

The CPEE program is currently serving as a model for business-education partnerships in every region of the United States.

It must be emphasized that such programs are paying increasingly significant attention to the development of education personnel, including teachers and administrators. It is recognized that the attitude of educators toward the business community (and vice versa) impacts greatly upon the quality of education and upon the attitudes toward business which young people bring with them to the workplace.

Reports of the Committee for Economic Development, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and many other agencies and organizations, emphasize the need

for dramatic changes in the ways in which teachers are trained and retrained, as well as changes in the systems of compensation and reward for excellence in teaching. Although the reports differ to some extent in their specific recommendations for remediation of current inadequacies in this regard, they are united in their strong advocacy of improvements in educational personnel training and compensation.

Another private-sector program to assist inner-city students to succeed in the worlds of education and business is the "Potentials" program sponsored by the pharmaceutical firm of SmithKline Beckman in conjunction with the Philadelphia public schools. Started in 1968, Potentials invites 14 public high schools to select two students each for participation in the 2-year program. Students begin in April of their junior year, working in the corporate offices after school with individual mentors in the departments of personnel, marketing, planning and finance, administration, investor relations, and corporate law. They are paid $3.71 an hour, and they are expected to adhere to standard corporate practice regarding attire, communication, punctuality, and general performance. Summer programs on ecology, research and development, and other topics expand the students' awareness of corporate involvements and interests. The student participants, all of whom are identified on the basis of financial need and high potential for success, have a remarkable record of success in college and in later fields of employment. Says William Grala, SmithKline Beckman's vice president for public affairs: "When someone cares about these young people, marvelous things happen. They become aware of appropriate attire, and they become concerned about their appearance. They become interested in their potentials for success in the corporate world. They want

to get close to it, to emulate the successful people they have as mentors. They see this as a way to escape poverty. They see themselves, some of them for the first time, as able to make a real contribution to society."

The imperatives of the 21st century are beginning to become clearly focused in the perspectives of business and education leaders in the United States. The challenges posed by the future will be successfully met only by continued and expanded involvement of the private sector in educational reform and the involvement of teachers, administrators, and students in understanding and planning for the changing needs of the workplace and our economy as we enter the new millenium.

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John Jay Bonstingl is an author, producer, and educator. He has been active in the field of education for many years as a teacher of social sciences on the junior high school and senior high school levels, and as an instructor of social studies methods courses on the graduate school level. He is currently on leave, working on a variety of education-related projects.

Mr. Bonstingl has travelled and studied abroad in many parts of the world, including India, the Soviet Union, China, the Middle East, and Europe. He has led several student field trips to foreign countries, and was chosen to direct the first National Education Association tour of China for young people in 1981. In addition, he has served as education consultant to the Netherlands ministry of education, Youth for Understanding, the Congress of the United States, and school systems in every region of the United States.

Mr. Bonstingl is a frequent keynote speaker at state and regional education conferences, and he has conducted teacher training seminars across the nation on leadership development, motivation-building, curriculum design, human relations, and creative problem-solving.

He is founder and director of The Fleetwood Institute, an international summer program of student leadership training. Mr. Bonstingl and his staff also conduct on-site workshops in leadership development for American public and private school students throughout the school year.

Mr. Bonstingl has served as education director of the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, and currently serves as chairman of the National Commission on the 2000 Imperative, a coalition of educational leaders who are examining ways in which educators can best help today's students prepare to become fully-functioning citizens in the world of the 21st century.

Mr. Bonstingl is president of Videocron Corporation, which produces educational videotapes for use in the classroom, including a forthcoming weekly video news program specifically designed for the social studies classroom. He has produced news-related public affairs programs for NBC television and radio affiliates.

Mr. Bonstingl is the author of a best-selling textbook, Introduction to the Social Sciences, published by Prentice-Hall/Allyn & Bacon, now in its second edition.

He is currently working on a new book, Children of Power, Children of Fear, which focuses on the problems and prospects of teenagers in the United States today.

Mr. Bonstingl's bachelor's degree is in the fields of psychology and social science education, and he earned his master of arts in history and curriculum development at Carnegie-Mellon University.

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